# Glass Slipper, Gold Sandal: A Worldwide Cinderella (review)

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years pass, Lin's musicianship earns her a scholarship to a private school, where she begins to blossom; she also hears the story of Obaachan's experiences in the bombing of Hiroshima and learns of her own family history, including the occasional flashes of precognition that she has inherited. Easton's fluid prose makes Lin a sympathetic narrator, whose view of her changing world is contemplative and questioning; the portrait of her family is authentic and individual, with her mother's desire to put her Japanese past behind her understandable in perspective, as is Lin's connection with her grandmother. The narrative is shaped more like a memoir than a novel, though, with detailed evocation of pop culture and current events from 1996 to 2006 tending to crowd rather than enrich Lin's experiences; the trajectory of Lin's decade, marked somewhat by Obaachan's death but even more by her beginning to date the boy she's always had a crush on, is too subtle for solid novelistic satisfaction. Readers more interested in nuanced human portrayals than plot drama will still appreciate the warmth and spirituality of Lin's bond with her grandmother, and they'll recognize its importance in her growth. DS

**Ephron, Delia** *Frannie in Pieces;* illus. by Chad W. Beckerman. Geringer/HarperTeen, 2007 [384p]
Library ed. ISBN 978-0-06-074717-6 $17.89
Trade ed. ISBN 978-0-06-074716-9 $16.99
Reviewed from galleys R* Gr. 7-10

When Frannie's beloved father suffers a sudden fatal heart attack, Frannie is devastated, pushing away her mother (long divorced from Frannie's father and since remarried) and obsessing over the risks of everyday life. Her obsession soon focuses on a jigsaw puzzle, seemingly an early birthday present, that she secretly finds among her carpenter father's things. As she pieces the puzzle together, she begins to slip magically into the past scene that the image painted by her father depicts, and she hangs her hope on the possibility of not only understanding more about this time in her father's history but also of meeting him there to see him one last time. Ephron writes with easy agility, and Frannie's voice retains rueful and rebellious humor even as she's buried in mourning. The book lays out with crystal and painful clarity the specific gifts Frannie's relationship with her father brought her and what she's lost with him, while her conversion of grief into anger at those around her is psychologically credible but never overplayed or overexplained. The touch of fantasy fits in supportively, underscoring the psychological drama rather than becoming a theme in itself. Filled with authenticity in its complicated emotions and accessibility in its appealing narrator, this is an exceptional story of loss and recovery. DS

**Fleischman, Paul,** ad. *Glass Slipper, Gold Sandal: A Worldwide Cinderella;* illus. by Julie Paschkis. Holt, 2007 32p
ISBN 978-0-8050-7953-1 $16.95 R Gr. 2-4

Regional variations of the Cinderella story abound, casting the elements of the story in contexts specific to the culture in which they are set. Fleischman takes a different approach here by setting his version of the tale in multiple contexts, shifting remarkably smoothly from one place to another, paragraph by paragraph, while preserving the cultural details of each. From page to page, and sometimes from frame to frame within a page, the narrative line remains intact while the setting and story details move among the cultures of Mexico, Korea, Iraq, Russia, Iran, India,

Ireland, Zimbabwe, Germany, Appalachia, Laos, Indonesia, China, Japan, France, West Indies, and Poland. While the young protagonist would in fact look a bit eccentric if she really wore a sarong of gold from Indonesia, a cloak of feathers from China, and a red kimono from Japan all at the same time, the spirit of a magically provided, extravagantly beautiful gown is what is effectively evoked by Fleischman's layers, leaving readers to skitter through their own imaginations for the perfect look. In fact, the various types of food, royal gatherings, and magics referred to, as well as the costuming, give the sense of connectedness across cultures rather than appropriation or confusion. Paschkis' folk-art illustrations join Fleischman's text in providing an array of imaginative options while maintaining the familiar elements of the Cinderella story, from frowning stepsisters to exotic footwear. Backgrounds that cheerily evoke textiles with ethnically inspired colors and motifs frame insets that carry the tale's plot; the busy final illustration culminates the cultural fusion with a riotous marriage montage. Even for collections chock-full of Cinderella variants, this provides a new twist. KC

**Freedman, Russell** *Who Was First?: Discovering the Americas.* Clarion, 2007 [88p] illus. with photographs
ISBN 978-0-618-66391-0 $19.00
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 5-8

Kids who stay awake in social studies class know that—the celebratory October holiday notwithstanding—Columbus did not discover America, and neither, for that matter, did Lucky Leif Eriksson, whose fellow Norsemen were ultimately driven off by the land's previous occupants. This logically prompts the question, "Then who did?" Here Freedman works his way back through time to consider groups who have been put forward as contenders for the title of First. After reviewing and dismissing the well-known claims of Columbus and the Vikings in the opening chapters, he considers those less frequently discussed for a child audience. There is Gavin Menzies' controversial contention that Zheng He's Chinese fleet touched ground in 1421, and dissenting scholarship that places a Chinese landing even centuries earlier than that. There's the argument, now largely discredited, that Asiatic peoples crossed a Siberian land bridge to North America during the Ice Age, and another view that they arrived by sea in South America and made their way north. He also explores tantalizing evidence that Europeans may have checked in first after all. A variety of illustrations from maps and models to dioramas and paintings embellish the text; a bibliography, index, and specific sources for quotations are also included. Although Freedman offers no definite answer to the titular query, he ably argues that "discovery" may need to be pushed back some 50,000 years, and he brings young readers up to speed on several current anthropological mysteries. EB

**Gipi** *Notes for a War Story;* written and illus. by Gipi; tr. by Spectrum. First Second/Roaring Brook, 2007 126p
ISBN 978-1-59643-261-1 $16.95 R Gr. 9-12

Young adults who followed the comparatively tame aspirations of the quartet in Gipi's *Garage Band* (BCCB 7/07) will find themselves in a drastically different milieu here in this imported graphic novel. Three teenage boys roam the bombed-out villages of their nameless southern European nation in a nameless war, drawn together by convenience rather than friendship. In dire need of shelter and cash, they offer their services to crime boss Felix, and self-styled "Little Killer" Stefano